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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3914th meeting of the Security Council, held on 6 August 1998, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled 'The situation in Afghanistan', the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

'The Security Council expresses its grave concern at the new sharp escalation of the military confrontation in Afghanistan, which is a growing threat to regional and international peace and security, and demands an urgent and unconditional ceasefire leading to a final end to the hostilities.

'The Security Council reiterates that the Afghan crisis can be settled only by peaceful means, through direct negotiations between the Afghan factions under United Nations auspices, aimed at achieving mutually acceptable solutions accommodating the rights and interests of all ethnic, religious and political groups of Afghan society.

'The Security Council calls upon all Afghan parties to return to the negotiating table without delay and preconditions and to cooperate with the aim of creating a broad-based and fully representative government, which would protect the rights of all Afghans and observe the international obligations of Afghanistan. The Council calls upon all States neighbouring Afghanistan and other States with influence in Afghanistan to intensify their efforts under the aegis of the United Nations to bring the parties to a negotiated settlement.

'The Security Council demands that the Afghan parties and those countries concerned observe fully the provisions of the relevant resolutions on Afghanistan adopted by the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council.

'The Security Council calls upon all States to refrain from any outside interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, including the involvement of foreign military personnel. It reiterates that any such interference from abroad should cease immediately and calls upon all States to end the supply of arms and ammunition to all parties to the conflict and

to take resolute measures to prohibit their military personnel from planning and participating in combat operations in Afghanistan.

"The Security Council is deeply concerned at the serious humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. It calls upon all Afghan parties and, in particular, the Taliban, to take the necessary steps to secure the uninterrupted supply of humanitarian aid to all in need of it and in this connection not to create impediments to the activities of the United Nations humanitarian agencies and international humanitarian organizations. The Council condemns the killing of the two Afghan staff members of the World Food Programme and of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Jalalabad.

"The Security Council once again urges all Afghan factions to cooperate fully with the United Nations Special Mission to Afghanistan and international humanitarian organizations and calls upon them, in particular the Taliban, to take the necessary steps to assure the safety and freedom of movement of such personnel. The Council deplores the measures taken by the Taliban which have made it impossible for nearly all international humanitarian organizations to continue their work in Kabul. It supports the efforts of the Office of the Coordinator for humanitarian affairs in its current talks with the Taliban in order to ensure adequate conditions for the delivery of aid by humanitarian organizations.

"The Security Council remains deeply concerned at the continuing discrimination against girls and women and other violations of human rights as well as violations of international humanitarian law in Afghanistan.

"The Security Council calls upon all parties to respect international conventions regarding the treatment of prisoners of war and the rights of non-combatants.

"The Security Council will remain seized of the matter."